

Shout
Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022, 11:30 a.m., All Saints Church, Pasadena
The Rev. Mike Kinman

Shout, shout, let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"
Jesus replied, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the very stones would shout out!"*

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Some things change when you get ordained a priest.

And one of them is this.

People start apologizing for swearing around you.

It is like this compulsive thing.

You'll be having this real conversation with someone, and they'll let an f-bomb or an s-bomb or any other kind of bomb fly and then they get all apologetic like they have just accidentally insulted my grandmother or something ... offended my delicate sensibilities.

And they say, Oh ... I'm so sorry.

And my first reaction is like

Seriously?

You think you can throw me with that?

Seriously?

You think I don't use language like that all the time?

Seriously?

You don't think Jesus used language like that all the time?

Seriously?

You don't think that language isn't there for a reason?

But what really bothers me about that ... much more than this idea that I am this delicate flower who will wilt if you use such language around me ... is what it says about our concept of what is proper for church and what is improper for church.

Our concept of what is obscene and what is not.

Our concept of what parts of ourselves are worthy of being brought into this space and to this table ... and what are not.

Our concept that we have to somehow clean ourselves up for God ... like God doesn't know what you say when someone cuts you off on the 110 anyway.

I am no conspiracy theorist, but I have become convinced that it is absolutely a plot. It is a plot to keep us from bringing our full selves into this community, into this space and to this table.

Because when we bring our full selves ... all the stuff that we are not supposed to say and discuss in polite company ... into this community, into this space, and to this table ... there is POWER there.

Power to overthrow things.

Power to change things.

Power to heal things.

Power to free us all.

The power of knowing God's unconditional love so profoundly that we cannot help but sing and dance and shout.

When I was growing up, I was taught there were things you weren't supposed to talk about in polite company ... that was the phrase that was always used

Don't talk about that in "polite company."

The list went like this

Money

Sex

Politics

Religion

Do you know why we aren't supposed to talk about those things in "polite company?"

Because every single one of those is about identity. It is about who we are and what we value.

And yes, when we start talking about those things, there is always the danger of someone getting offended or hurt ... and that's the fear that is used to keep us in line and keep us quiet.

And ... unless we talk about those things, we will never truly encounter one another.

Unless we talk about those things, we will never truly learn about ourselves or one another.

Unless we talk about those things, we will never expose the wounds we have to the healing power of God's love in community.

One of the most transformative moments in the history of All Saints Church was when Ed Bacon went on Oprah and said, "being gay is a gift from God."

Because "I am gay. Lesbian. Bisexual. Transgender. Intersex. Queer" These were words you were not supposed to say in church about yourself.

That moment didn't start with Ed. That moment started with courageous members of this community daring to speak their truth out loud.

And not just in a mumble.

I mean, it might have started in a mumble. But it grew into a shout.

A shout that finally could no longer be ignored.

Chance the Rapper says, "There is nothing like the feeling of shouting your story to people."

Don Thomas was telling me the other night about a dear member of the All Saints Community, Mel White, who used to go to Jerry Falwell's church ... and every time Jerry would mention homosexuality in one of his hateful rants, he and his partner would stand up right in the middle of that service. Claiming with pride that that thing that was supposed to be too obscene to be part of the community was right there in the middle of the community, was a sacred and proud part of that community and was meeting hate with love.

There is nothing like the feeling of shouting your story to people.

That's following the revolutionary Jesus right there.

We shout in protest ... and for good reason when Florida tries to pass a law against saying the word gay because we know that silencing is death. And... too often we voluntarily do the exact same thing as the church.

The idea that there are words we should not say in church ... that there are things we should not talk about in church ... is all about those in power trying to cut us off from the power that will take a world turned upside down and make it right again.

It is a church that wants to cut us off from the revolutionary healing power of Jesus and instead tells us to be ashamed of parts of ourselves.

It is a church that wants to cut us off from the revolutionary transformative power of Jesus and instead tells us not to get too political in church because we might make people upset and they might leave and take their money with them – which, hand to God, I have always found deeply ignorant of and offensive to all of you who so generously give to the mission and ministry of churches like this because my experience of you is you all want to keep it as real as possible!

It is a church that wants to cut us off from the revolutionary power of Jesus and instead is happy to use our fear of offending to keep the church safely irrelevant and impotent ... a place where nice people go to hear nice music and nice words and be nice to one another.

Niceness is not a Christian value.

When I have been out on the streets being led by the incredible young, black and brown activists we have in this country ... and when they come into churches like this ... they do not care if we are offended by the words that come out of their lips.

They will drop f-bombs and s-bombs and all sorts of bombs all over the place.

I heard my revolutionary colleague the Rev. Osagyefo Sekou say once to a group of people who were clutching their pearls and stiffening their necks over the language these young activists are using “if you are more offended by the words they are using than the obscenity of the conditions they are living in ... you need to ask yourselves what your definition of obscenity is and why.”

To be honest, I find the word bomb far more offensive than any of the f and s words people are afraid of saying in a church or to a priest.

And by the way if you are wondering why I am not just saying those words, it’s because I know if I did the only thing you all would be talking about when you left here was “did you hear what the rector said from the pulpit?”

So we’ll leave that for another day!

“There is nothing like the feeling of shouting your story to people.”

We wave palms today not because they make dandy decorations but because we are re-enacting a moment where the people decided they were tired of being told what they could and could not say in church.

They were tired of suppressing the pain.

They were tired of suppressing the anger.

They were tired of suppressing the joy.

And they had met someone who had told them they didn't have to do that anymore.

They had met someone who had told them they didn't have to be afraid anymore.

They had met someone who knew everything they had on their hearts. Everything they had been carrying. And who told them that God loved them not in spite of all of it but through all of it and even because of all of it.

They had met Jesus ... and Jesus had told them that the church had lied to them.

They met a revolutionary Jesus who didn't want to turn the world upside down ... he saw that it was upside down already and he wanted to turn it right side up.

As the Rev. Gayle Fisher-Stewart said at our Black and Episcopalian book group this week "When Jesus was in church buildings he was cutting up. Episcopal Church, I can't deal with your milquetoast Jesus."

They had met a revolutionary Jesus who said there is nothing like the feeling of shouting your story to people.

But the religious authorities ... the church people ... oh they weren't having any of that.

And they went to Jesus, and they got all puffed up tried to shame him and pressure him into controlling the people ... "Teacher ... rebuke your disciples!"

Not realizing that Jesus was not playing their game.

That Jesus wasn't the least bit interested in control.

Jesus was interested in love.

And love is many things but it has nothing to do with control.

Love is as messy and real as we are.

Each and every one of us.

And that's what Jesus wanted. For the people to finally feel the joy of shouting their story.

And so, Jesus said, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the very stones would shout out."

And then in my sanctified imagination, I believe Jesus turned to the crowd and sang, two thousand years before it hit the charts.

"Shout, shout, let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on"

We wave palms today not because they make dandy decorations but because we are re-enacting a moment where the people decided they were tired of being told what they could and could not say in church.

Because the people looked around at a world turned upside down and decided it was long past time to shout out all those things that we can do without.

All those things that imprison instead of liberate.

All those things that wound instead of heal.

All those things that hate instead of love.

All those things that convince us that there are pieces of ourselves that God does not want to see instead of singing and dancing with joy at a God who goes to bed at night dreaming about us and giggling to herself with joy about how much she loves us.

So, if we are really going to do Palm Sunday ... let's really do Palm Sunday.

Not sitting politely in our pews.

I swear to God if we do that one more minute these very stones might shout out.

I know there are things on your heart.

As you look at your lives.

As you look at this world turned upside down.

As you look at everything that isn't the way it should be.

What can you do without?

Come on ... I'm talking to you.

What can you do without? Shout it out!

(People in the congregation shout out the things they can do without)

That is our truth. That is our story. And there is nothing like the feeling of shouting your story.

So if you can get on your feet, get on your feet, and Manny is going to cue up the music.

And if you're watching this online, you're going to lose the audio because we don't want the copyright cops shutting down the livestream. But you can go all Howard Beale on your own wherever you are.

Because we are going to sing and we are going to dance and we are going to clap and we are going to shout.

You know the words to the chorus

Shout, shout, let it all out
 These are the things I can do without
 Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

And when we get to the musical interlude we are just going to shout out all the things we can do without. And we are going to have our own Palm Sunday party right here.

Shout, shout, let it all out
 These are the things I can do without
 Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

Shout, shout, let it all out
 These are the things I can do without
 Come on, I'm talking to you, come on
 I

n violent times
 You shouldn't have to sell your soul
 In black and white
 They really, really ought to know
 Those one track minds
 They took you for a working boy
 Kiss them goodbye

You shouldn't have to jump for joy
You shouldn't have to jump for joy (Shout, shout)

Let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

They gave you life
And in return you gave them Hell
As cold as ice
I hope we live to tell the tale
I hope we live to tell the tale (Shout, shout)

Let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

Shout, shout, let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

Shout, shout, let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

And when you've taken down your guard
If I could change your mind
I'd really love to break your heart
I'd really love to break your heart (Shout, shout)

Let it all out
These are the things I can do without
(Really love to break your heart) Come on, I'm talking to you, come on

Shout, shout, let it all out
These are the things I can do without
Come on, I'm talking to you, so come on

Amen.